In the Claims

1-53 Canceled

54. (Previously Presented) An extract of Rhizoma Chuanxiong, characterized in that the extract is capable of eliciting progestogenic activity in a progestogen receptor assay.

55. (Previously Presented) An extract as claimed in claim 54, wherein the extract is capable of eliciting an increase in progesterone reporter gene activity in the range 50-fold to 350-fold relative to a negative control.

56. (Previously Presented) An extract according to claim 55, wherein the increase in progesterone reporter gene activity is 150 fold to 200 fold relative to a negative control.

57. (Previously Presented) An extract according to claim 55, wherein the progesterone reporter gene comprises a luciferase reporter gene driven by two copies of progesterone response element from aminotransferase.

58. (Previously Presented) An extract according to claim 54, wherein the extract is at a concentration in the range of 6.25μg/ml to 100μg/ml in the progestogen receptor assay.

59. (Previously Presented) An extract according to claim 58, wherein the progestogen receptor assay comprises RPMI 1640 medium.

60. (Previously Presented) An extract according to claim 59, wherein progestogen receptor assay comprises 10% charcoal-stripped fetal calf serum, 2mM L-glutamine, 0.1mM non essential amino acids and 1mM sodium pyruvate, and wherein the extract is capable of eliciting the 50-fold to 350-fold increase in progesterone reporter gene activity after exposure for 42-48 hours at 37°C in a 5% carbon dioxide incubator.

61. (Previously Presented) An extract according to claim 54, comprising 3-butyl-4,5-dihydrophthalide and 3-butyl-phthalide.

62. (Previously Presented) An extract according to claim 61, wherein the 3-butyl-4,5-dihydrophthalide is present in the extract in an amount of about 95wt% and the 3-butyl-phthalide is present in the extract in an amount of about 2wt%.

63. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of the extract of claim 54, in a pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle.

64. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 63, wherein the pharmaceutical composition is capable of being administered orally or subcutaneously.

65. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition as claimed in claim 63, wherein the therapeutically effective amount is within the range 31.25mg to 500mg per 5000ml of total blood volume.

66. (Previously Presented) Use of the extract of claim 1, for the manufacture of a medicament for treating a progesterone condition in a human or animal.

67. (Previously Presented) The use of claim 66, wherein the progesterone condition is selected from the group consisting of progesterone replacement, progesterone supplementation, menstrual disorders, amenorrhoea, menorrhagia, polycystic ovarian syndrome, pregnancy complications, endometriosis, contraception, menopause, and endometrial hyperplasia.

68. (Previously Presented) Use of the extract of claim 54, for the manufacture of a medicament for treating stroke or brain injuries in a human or animal.

69. (Previously Presented) A method of preparing an extract, the method comprising the step of subjecting Rhizoma Chuanxiong herb to an alcoholic solvent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, methanol water, ethanol water, and mixtures thereof, at a temperature and for a time to produce the extract characterized by being capable of eliciting progestogenic activity in a progestogen receptor assay.

70. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 69, wherein the extract capable of eliciting an increase in progesterone reporter gene activity in the range 50-fold to 350-fold relative to a negative control.

71. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 69, comprising at least partially removing one or more tannins from the extract to produce purified extract.

72. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the removing comprises:

fractionating the extract by solid phase fractionation using a polar solvent, a non polar solvent and a mixed polarity solvent that has a polarity intermediate the polar and non polar solvents; and

extracting purified extract from the intermediate polar solvent.

73. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 22, comprising using, as the mixed polarity solvent, a mixture comprising polar solvent and dichloromethane (DCM).

74. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the removing comprises subjecting the extract to solvent-solvent extraction using mixtures of polar and non polar solvents.

75. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 74, wherein the polar solvents are selected from the group consisting of water, ethanol, butanol, and mixtures thereof, and the non polar solvents are selected from the group consisting of hexane, dichloromethane (DCM), and mixtures thereof.

76. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 75, comprising obtaining purified extract from the non polar solvent.

77. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 69, further comprising, separating the extract from the Rhizoma Chuanxiong herb.

78. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 77, further comprising drying the separated extract.

79. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 78, comprising suspending the extract in an alcoholic medium.

80. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 69, comprising suspending the extract at a concentration in the range 6.25μg/ml to 10Oμg/ml of an assay.

81. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 79, comprising suspending the extract at a concentration of 50μg/ml.

82. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 69, wherein the subjecting is carried out for 5-7 days at 37°C.

83. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 69, wherein the ethanol-water solvent comprises 50% or 70% ethanol in water by weight and wherein the methanol is 70% methanol in water by weight.

84. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 71, wherein the removing comprises subjecting the extract to High Performance Liquid Chromatography.

85. (Previously Presented) An extract of Rhizoma Chuanxiong, characterized in that the extract has a progestogenic activity to progesterone, in a range selected from the group consisting of: 23.39% to 79.86%; 23.39% to 48.17%; and 48.17% to 79.86%, and mixtures thereof.

86. (Previously Presented) A method for the preparation of an alcoholic extract from Rhizoma Chuanxiong useful as a progestogen, said method comprising subjecting powdered Rhizoma Chuanxiong to a first extraction with alcoholic solvent selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, methanol-water, ethanol-water, and mixtures thereof, separating a first Rhizoma Chuanxiong extract obtained thereby from a supernatant, subjecting the filtered first extract to a second extraction with an alcoholic solvent to obtain a second extract, wherein the first and second extractions are at a temperature and for a time to produce the extract, wherein the extract is capable of eliciting progestogenic activity in a progestogen receptor assay.

87. (Currently Amended) An extract of Rhizoma Chuanxiong obtained from a process according to claim 69 ~~or claim 86~~.

88. (New) An extract of Rhizoma Chuanxiong obtained from a process according to claim 86.